



VISION

Literacy Bridges for Kansas is a network of practicing educators, reading educators, reading scientists, education specialists, school administrators and leaders, community organizations, state leaders, and families that collaboratively creates and implements technology-enhanced innovations to boost educators’ structured literacy knowledge and implementation and elevate the literacy of all Kansas students.

Background

Literacy is critical for academic success and lifelong learning. We agree with Shanahan (2008) who stated that “the ability to read and write is fundamental to the full participation in American society” (p. xiii). Third grade reading levels strongly predict college attendance (Lesnick, et al., 2010), and literacy greatly impacts individuals’ employment opportunities, communication, confidence, and understanding of health information (OECD, 2019). Indeed, those who struggle to read and write earn less, work less, vote less, and are more likely to be involved with the justice system (NELP, 2008).

Difficulty with **reading comprehension** stems from one or both pathways captured in the Simple View of Reading (Hoover and Gough, 1990) – **word recognition** and **language comprehension**. Much of the science about reading has been aimed at the



word recognition strands of phonological awareness, decoding, and sight word reading. Although some strongholds remain, extensive efforts have largely de-

implemented ineffective decoding strategies (e.g., three-cueing) from U.S. schools. The Science of Reading (SOR) movement has brought clarity to evidence-based word recognition instruction grounded in phonics. A structured literacy approach emphasizes the need for explicit, systematic, and cumulative instruction (IDA, 2019) and it has aptly been applied to the building blocks of word recognition.

The same cannot be said about the other critical reading comprehension pathway – language comprehension. The language students are expected to understand and produce in school is often unfamiliar, demanding, and requires extensive background knowledge and cognitive resources. As grades progress, discourse structures become more elaborate, morphosyntax becomes more complex, and vocabulary becomes more abstract (Uccelli & Phillips Galloway, 2018). Attention to academic language, the complex functions and forms of language needed to acquire and express knowledge, is supported by research (Cervetti et al, 2018), but the intensity needed is not reflected in current classroom practices. Historically, instruction focused on comprehension is delayed until word recognition has been established (Snow & Uccelli, 2009). Thanks to the recent SOR movement, educators

recognize the missed opportunities for building the oral language foundation of reading and writing. There have been considerable recent investments in educators' knowledge of key language features and language acquisition (e.g., LETRS; Moats et al., 2010). Yet, they struggle to apply explicit, systematic, and cumulative instruction to language comprehension like they do for word recognition (IDA, 2019).

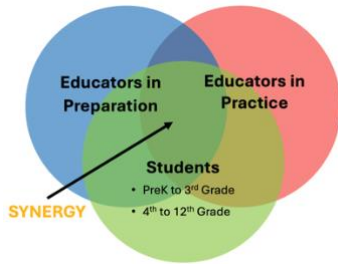
Many Kansas students do not attain the literacy needed to be financially independent, healthy, productive adults (NCES; NAEP, 1992-2022). Even more disheartening is that 76% of English learners in Kansas do not advance past the basic level in English language arts (Kansas Legislative Division, 2020). To **connect science to practice** in Kansas, there are two clear needs: 1) We must increase educators' mastery of structured literacy for word recognition and create pathways to support sustainable SOR implementation in every school and in every community; 2) We must intentionally and strategically apply explicit, systematic, and cumulative instruction to promote, reinforce, and expand language comprehension and build knowledge of Kansas students, especially those from marginalized communities, so that higher-order reading and writing skills emerge. Without evidence-based efforts to elevate both word recognition and language comprehension, we will not achieve the fundamental goal of literacy for all Kansans.

PLAN OVERVIEW

With the charge to serve **Catchment Area 6**, the newly assembled interdisciplinary **Literacy Bridges for Kansas (LBK)** team engaged a variety of partners with similar literacy missions as we developed an initial Center of Excellence plan in alignment with SB 438. We have planned for an initial start-up phase we call **building bridges** (January-June 2025), in which we will conduct a large, coordinated needs assessment to identify the unmet needs in our catchment area, the assets of all the partners, and identify priorities. In the subsequent years, we will continue to **strengthen bridges** as we scale up and implement the LBK vision.

<h3>Catchment Area 6</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Million people 5 Counties 11 Independent & community colleges 23 School districts 168,700 Students 44% Economically disadvantaged 5-30% Bilingual students 	<h4>KEY START UP ACTIVITIES</h4> <p><i>Building bridges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a LBK leadership structure and process • Convene an advisory board • Hire and train staff • Secure spaces across the catchment area • Purchase initial supplies • Conduct a needs assessment • Develop LBK website • Create technology enhancement prototypes 	<h4>KEY SCALE UP ACTIVITIES</h4> <p><i>Strengthening bridges</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold regular community meetings • Operate Simulation Lab • Implement three-tiered model of professional learning • Host Summer Literacy Institutes • Run literacy summer camps • Assist districts to develop literacy plans • Offer literacy screenings • Coordinate after-school tutoring in community sites • Administer microcredentials • Engage in ongoing improvement
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The plan detailed in the following pages addresses how LBK will support three service circles: 1) **Educators in preparation**, 2) **Educators in Practice**, and 3) **Students & Families**. Educators in preparation are referred to as pre-service teachers in SB 438, but since our plan includes a consideration of education specialists such as school psychologists and speech-language pathologists, as well as administrators and other literacy professionals, we use the inclusive term educators in preparation. Educators in practice (i.e., in-service teachers) include the same groups of educators, but who are already practicing in KS schools. Services for students and families are divided into two



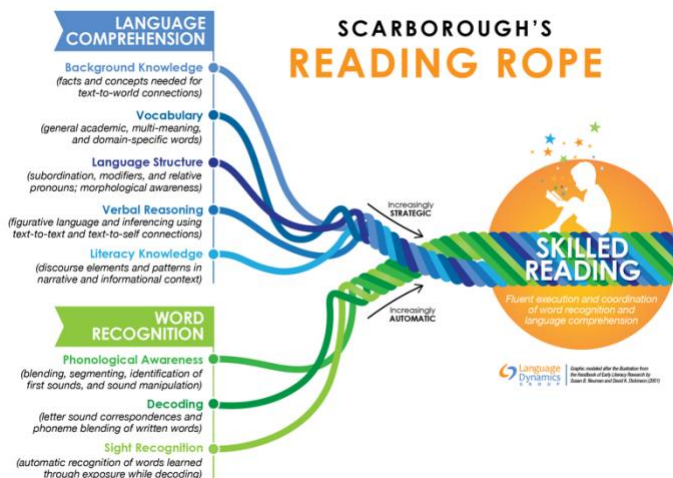
groups because the SOR practices are applied to these student groups differently. While we present services for these three groups as separate components of the plan, we capitalize on **synergistic** goals and to build bridges from one group to another while generating mutually beneficial outcomes for everyone. Because we have planned numerous technology-based enhancements, we will create and maintain

a user-friendly **LBK website** to house them. This will be critical to the organized execution of LBK activities, especially given the diversity and numbers in our catchment area and the number of partners needed to ensure LBK reaches everyone. We strategically leverage technology and innovation to reach more students, engage our college, district, and community partners, and amplify our impact, all while reducing costs. We are driven by a commitment to provide rich literacy learning experiences for all educators, and to serve students and families' literacy needs as effectively and conveniently as possible. We also recognize that other centers of excellence besides LBK may be more equipped to meet some state-level needs and vice versa. We expect that as we learn about the many literacy needs and assets in Kansas, we will partner with other centers of excellence and organizations across the state to ensure equitable quality services are available to all educators and all students.

EDUCATORS IN PREPARATION

CURRENT PROGRAMS

Education for teachers in training (this section involves only teachers; See Students & Families section below for information about specialists in training) at The University of Kansas (KU) is a collaborative effort among faculty in the Departments of Curriculum and Teaching and Special Education. All literacy faculty have literacy-focused doctoral degrees and have completed LETRS training. KU's SOR courses train teachers in both in five pillars of reading instruction (NRP, 2000) and structured literacy (Spear-Swerling, 2022) through in-class and field-based experiences. Faculty equip teachers in training with expert knowledge and skills necessary for delivering explicit, systematic, and cumulative literacy instruction based on student needs (i.e., core instruction, small group intervention, and one-on-one intervention). Across courses, teachers in training develop foundational knowledge and practical skills to teach **word recognition** (i.e., phonological awareness, letter-sound knowledge, sight recognition) and promote **language comprehension** (i.e., background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning and literacy knowledge; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Scarborough, 2001; Spear-Swerling, 2019).



Success of Current Programs

Completers of the Elementary Education programs at KU who took the PRAXIS 7812 exam have a consistent pattern of success meeting the passing score of 159. KU's School of Education and Human Sciences (SOEHS) maintains a **Quality Assurance**

KU's PRAXIS 7812 Exam Data

Completion Year	Pass	Fail	Total Testers	Pass Rate	Total Completers
2019-20	53	2	55	96%	55
2020-21	61	1	62	98%	69
2021-22	68	0	68	100%	74
2022-23	45	3	48	94%	50
2023-24	51	5	56	91%	58

System (QAS) to inform continuous improvement based on data and evidence collected, stored, monitored, analyzed, reported, and used by stakeholders. QAS facilitates the use of **data from multiple measures to inform continuous improvement** efforts related to candidates, programs, and the overall unit effectiveness. The PRAXIS 7812

exam is one measure of program quality, and data are reviewed by faculty in the Elementary program and by the Teacher Education Committee annually to support revisions to literacy coursework and fieldwork in literacy education.

ENHANCEMENTS TO TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Although university courses have been proven to enhance teachers' knowledge of structured literacy (Purvis et al., 2016; Spear Swerling & Brucker, 2003, 2006; Yessel, 2010), knowledge does not transfer to practical skills without intentional and strategic effort. As part of their coursework, teachers in training have practicum experiences in partnering school districts. They have opportunities to tutor one-on-one but have limited opportunities to deliver instruction to small groups. Within LBK, we will **strengthen teachers' transfer of knowledge to skills** in a series of simulation activities with faded supports, building up to independent structured literacy applications. The **LBK Simulation Lab**, which will be maintained on the **LBK website**, will meet SB 438 Center Requirements C.3 (Collaboration with key entities), C.5 (Structured reading applied learning), and C.6 (Simulation training laboratory). Three types of simulation activities will be integrated into **Practicum courses**, designed strategically to give teachers in training practice using evidence-based procedures in safe, controlled environments that imitate real-world scenarios (e.g., Remesh, 2013) before extending that practice to in-person, real world applications.

- **Most Support.** Teachers in training will use assessment simulation videos to (a) administer literacy assessments with videos; (b) analyze and interpret the assessment results to identify a student's strengths and needs; and (c) communicate assessment results and instructional plans to parents and colleagues in a virtual setting. To enact this, LBK will create a bank of assessment scenarios covering phonological awareness, letter-name/sound assessment, word identification, oral reading fluency, and language comprehension.
- **Moderate Support.** Teachers in training will engage in microteaching simulation experiences. In microteaching, teachers in training (a) plan for intervention lessons by using evidence-based instruction related to components of structured literacy; (b) deliver lessons to peers; and (c) reflect with peers and their coach/facilitator. Teachers in training will use a student case study to plan and implement a mini-intervention lesson appropriate to the student's needs. Debriefing with an LBK Simulate Lab Coach after each microteaching will encourage teachers in training and their peers to reflect on

strengths of lessons, areas for improvement, and the extent to which the instruction matched the needs of the case study student.

- **Minimal Support.** As part of LBK Simulation Lab, teachers in training will provide in-person small group reading lessons to students. They will video record their lessons and receive tailored feedback from a LBK Simulation Lab Coach using GoReact software. KU currently holds a subscription for GoReact, which allows a viewer to provide individualized, time-stamped feedback throughout the lesson. This will enable teachers in training to independently apply structured literacy practices learned in class, assessment simulations, and in microteaching experiences to real-world instructional contexts with real students.

Other Simulation Enhancements

In addition to the simulation activities for teachers in training enrolled in Practicum, the LBK team will develop an **extended reality simulation application** (C5, C6) where educators in preparation (and educators in practice) can learn and practice assessing and instructing students using science-based methods. Working with a programmer, designer, and SOR experts, our team will create the simulated interactive digital space where educators can engage with avatars and hone their teaching skills before implementing a skill in a classroom with real students. In the startup phase, our developer and experts in structured literacy will co-plan the extended-reality blueprint. By the end of the phase, prototype scenarios will be developed for whole group, small group, and individual instruction (one for each arrangement). Once these foundational elements (i.e., environment, avatars, scenario content, and back-end programming) are complete, additional scenarios will be built at a rate of three to five per year. Due to its virtual nature and accessibility on LBK website, this innovative application will be available state-wide.

EDUCATORS IN PRACTICE

CURRENT PROGRAMS

KU has many programs and partnerships that serve educators in practice, and several focused exclusively on literacy. LBK will build upon the successes of two KU centers to deliver **comprehensive P-12 professional learning and coaching support** for educators who support students in early childhood through adolescence. Juniper Gardens Children's Project (JGCP) will lead supports for Preschool to 3rd Grade (P-3) educators and systems, whereas KU's Center for Research on Learning (KUCRL) will lead supports for Grades 4-12 educators and systems. Both JGCP and KUCRL are centers within KU's Lifespan Institute, a network of more than 400 scientists, students, and staff whose mission is to improve the lives of individuals in communities through research, service, and outreach. KU is also home to The Center for Evaluation and Educational Leadership (CEEL) and The Center for Reimagining Education (CRE). The mission of CEEL is to support educational leaders to implement the most effective learning environments for students. CRE accelerates the pace of change in schools and districts by leveraging technology and data and bringing together diverse teams of people to open pathways for learning. CRE helps students, teachers, leaders, and districts innovate by taking ideas from conception to implementation. The CRE works with schools and the communities they serve through partnerships and practice and by centering learners as catalysts for change and transformation. As each school district and community is different, so are the resources educational leaders need to ensure student and educator success.

Current P-3 Educator in Practice Supports

JGCP is located at the Children’s Campus of Kansas City, a location accessible to families throughout the KC Metro area. For 60 years, JGCP has been a leader in community-based, community-engaged scholarship in which researchers partner with community members to co-create solutions to real-world, community-identified problems. JGCP has been awarded numerous service and research awards, including from the Council for Exceptional Children and the Kansas Association for Behavior Analysis. The 30 million word gap study (Hart & Risley, 1995) from JGCP investigators is a famous study that in part motivated the war on poverty. Schools across the U.S. use JGCP innovations, including peer-mediated academic and behavioral interventions (e.g., Class-wide Peer Tutoring), language interventions (e.g., Promoting Communication Tools for Advancing Language in Kids [PC-TALK], Story Champs), and literacy interventions (e.g., P-3 to Literacy, Literacy 3D). In addition, JGCP scholars are national and international leaders in multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS), coalitions for bridging the word gap, and using technology to measure child development. JGCP shares a building with two partner organizations, The Family Conservancy and Project Eagle, containing 14 Educare and Head Start classrooms. Multiple non-profit community organizations are also housed at JGCP, where collaborative, community-focused activities are the norm. The building is used every day by children and families in Kansas City area, many of whom speak Spanish as their primary language. Dr. Trina Spencer, Director of JGCP, will play a key leadership role for LBK as Associate Director of P-3 services.

JGCP interdisciplinary teams provide regular professional development and technical assistance to P-3 educators in practice, often using traditional webinars and in-person workshops. To reach more educators and reduce the costs to local and state education agencies, JGCP has recently adopted the ECHO model of professional learning (described below). Dr. Spencer has been actively establishing ECHO for Education programs in Africa and South America, and now Kansas. As a **Structured Literacy ECHO hub**, JGCP has the infrastructure to develop and deliver any professional content identified by educators and leaders in Kansas, ensuring equitable access to critical SOR knowledge AND ongoing support to foster quality implementation in classrooms across the state.

Current 4-12 Educator in Practice Supports

Adolescence begins in grade 4 and marks a period of greater emphasis on **reading to learn** important content. For nearly 50 years, KUCRL has been developing and researching educational programs and practices to improve the lives and learning of adolescent students with disabilities and their peers. In 1978, KUCRL was one of five research institutes selected by the U.S. Department of Education to pursue an evidence-based approach to instruction for students with learning disabilities (Hallahan & Mercer, 2002). Their targeted focus was adolescent literacy. Through their work, KUCRL has contributed vast scholarship and knowledge about what effective instruction looks like for adolescents with limited proficiencies in reading, writing, and content literacy. KUCRL has gained international recognition as a research and development organization, having published more than 150 researcher-designed and validated products, which have been

adopted by thousands of schools worldwide. Drs. Jocelyn Washburn and Suzanne Myers are Associate Directors of KUCRL and will serve as members of the LBK leadership team.

FRAMEWORKS FOR P-12 EDUCATOR IN PRACTICE SUPPORTS

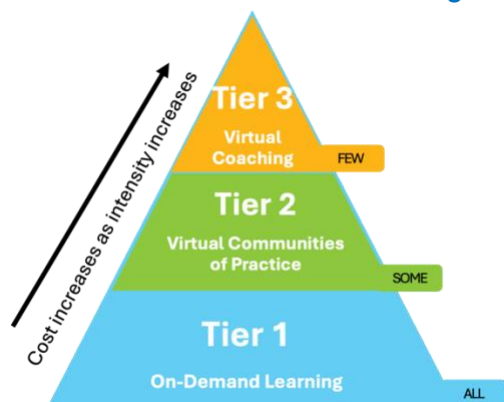
Adaptive Professional Learning Model

LBK will use an **Adaptive Professional Learning Model (APLM)** (C4). KU researchers have worked with external funders and educators throughout the country to develop the online APLM system with implementation tools for educators. LBK will provide direct support to school decision makers and implementers in reviewing and planning for their needs to effectively implement SOR practices. The APLM combines three key components of systems change: (1) infrastructure readiness and support, (2) high-quality professional development, and (3) technology-enhanced on-site and technology-enabled virtual coaching. These components are supported by strong partnerships with schools, an adaptive structure, technology, and features of effective educator professional learning. The model is informed by adult learning theory (Bandura, 1977; Knowles et al., 1998) and a partnership theory of learning (Knight & Hock, 2012). Research to practice is supported when teachers, administrators, coaches and researchers follow principles to develop goals as equals, make decisions collaboratively, engage in dialogue to solve problems, provide opportunities for all partners to have a voice, and make ideas applicable to specific contexts (Knight et al., 2015; Knight et al., 2018; Knight & Hock, 2012). The APLM functions within school contexts, requiring adaptations while maintaining core components (Leko, 2015; Leko et al., 2015). The APLM exists within an online dashboard, known as the APLM-Online. Online tools for instructional coaches and teachers exist within the APLM-Online dashboard, and will be made available to administrators, coaches, and educators through LBK work. Coaching tools include a Coaching Log, Goal Setting, and Conversation Guides.

Three-tiered Model of Professional Learning

Taking an adaptive approach to professional learning requires options for implementation support. Therefore, LBK will use a **three-tiered model of professional learning** to address educators' unique and changing needs. This three-tier model will provide educators in practice many options to customize support for their professional learning needs in literacy. This is critical because not all educators will require the same intensity of professional support, and using a tiered model reduces wasteful spending and ensures every educator gets what they need.

Tier 1 On-Demand Learning Library – Research shows that when educators can

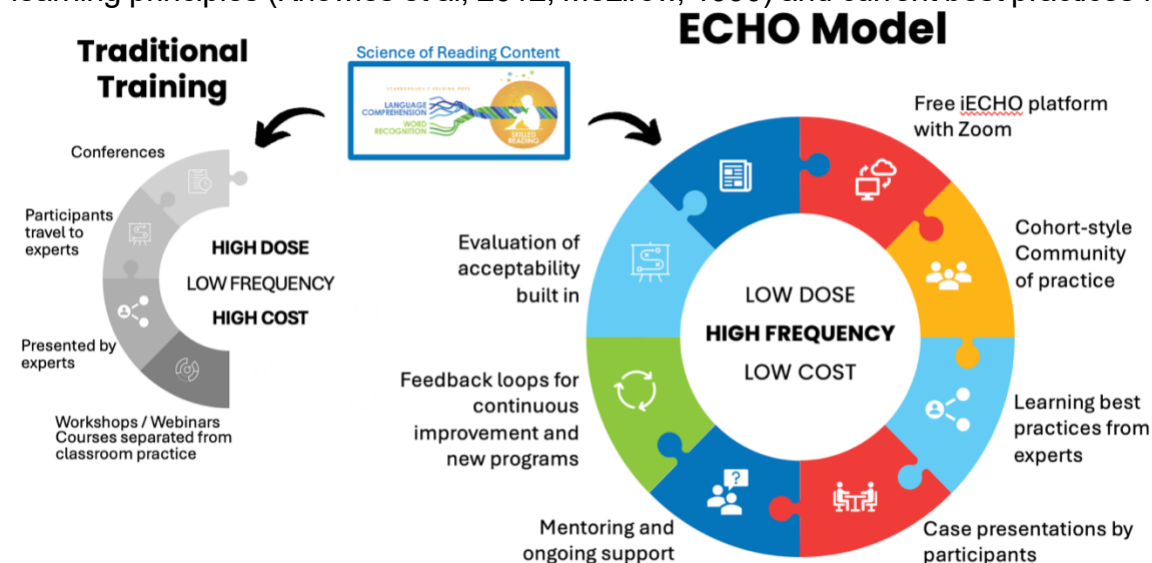


select a topic of professional learning based on their needs and can access it without barriers of time and resources, the content is more meaningful to them. (e.g., Spencer et al., 2024; Nahum-Shani et al., 2018). The LBK team will develop a repository of short explanatory and demonstration videos that all types of educators in practice can access quickly and easily at their point of need—called Just-In-Time (JIT) supports. Videos should serve as reminders and implementation examples based on prior SOR training. They will be less than one minute long and cover topics like phonological

and phonemic awareness, how to say stop sounds correctly, demonstrating an inferential vocabulary teaching episode, and showing how to elicit personal stories from students.

Other formats of on-demand learning not considered JIT supports will be added to the LBK website repository as they are developed. These may include longer explanatory videos, podcasts, and videocasts that are better suited for topics that require more in-depth discussion and nuanced consideration. Leveraging the expertise of an instructional designer, web developer, and communication specialist, we will host and record interviews, panel discussions, and live audience shows with Kansas reading scientists, literacy educators, and practicing experts. All audio and video materials in the repository on the LBK website may be shared across social media platforms to promote broad distribution.

Tier 2 Virtual Communities of Practice – In contrast to more traditional professional development formats such as on-site conferences and workshops, virtual communities of practice (VCOPs) provide a low-cost, high-frequency, low-intensity model of professional learning. LBK will use the ECHO model to engage educators in practice in our catchment area. The ECHO model emphasizes peer-to-peer and expert-to-peer mentoring, case-based problem solving, and an all-teach, all-learn philosophy. ECHO aligns with adult learning principles (Knowles et al, 2012; Mezirow, 1990) and current best practices for



sustained, collaborative, and practice-based professional learning (Darling-Hammond et al, 2017; Desimone, 2009; Dunst et al., 2015; Timperly et al., 2007). ECHO programs are developed around a specific topic and a cohort of professionals attend regular weekly or biweekly for 1 to 1.5 hours. Each session is comprised of a short presentation by a subject matter expert and then educators work to apply new knowledge to a problem of practice. As part of the LBK work, educators in practice will receive a microcredential or continuing education credit for completing ECHO programs at no cost to them.

Tier 3 One-on-one Virtual Coaching – Dr. Myers and colleagues at KUCRL created the VECTOR virtual coaching model and have experience operating virtual coaching programs to improve literacy instruction in schools throughout the country. The VECTOR model is a collaborative coaching model that focuses on setting and achieving data-driven implementation goals. P-12 classroom teachers benefit from the non-evaluative, non-threatening support to improve their practice. LBK literacy experts will train, supervise, and coordinate literacy coaches to work one-on-one with P-12 educators in practice to support

implementation of SOR and structured literacy practices. Schools, districts, or educators in practice will be able to submit requests for individual virtual coaching and LBK staff will pair teachers with a virtual coach to support their SOR and structured literacy implementation. Coaches will provide literacy coaching to schools that do not employ on-site coaches (e.g., rural schools) and to schools that would benefit from additional implementation support.

ENHANCEMENTS TO EDUCATOR IN PRACTICE SUPPORTS

P-3 Supports (C4)

Given the breadth and depth of expertise and innovations at JGCP, we are prepared to offer an expanded set of P-3 educator in practice supports. LBK expansions include curated structured literacy resources, a menu of topic-centered VCOPs, virtual coaching, and local summer boot camp supports.

- **Structured Literacy Resources.** JGCP has developed several literacy assessments, curricula, and interventions to promote literacy achievement of P-3 students, all of which have been validated and are currently available for educator use. Through LBK, educators in practice can access information about each one, as well as other evidence-based structured literacy resources, alongside the research evidence and practice guides. Resources about these tools will be in a searchable repository on the **LBK website** in video, podcast, and print formats.
- **Professional Learning Programs.** To bridge the knowledge and implementation gaps in Kansas, we will work with educators in practice to identify a list of topics that will fill existing gaps. Based on their priorities, we will create a menu of ECHO programs (hosted on the **LBK website**) that merge knowledge and implementation of structured literacy. We will develop programs for various audiences, including teachers of different grades, special education teachers, principals, literacy specialists, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, families, and others as identified by stakeholders. Sample program topics include *The Reading Rope*, *Building Word Reading Automaticity in First Grade*, *Blending and Segmenting*, and *Designing an Efficient Literacy Block*. In addition, programs to support the effective use of the structured literacy resources (above) will be available via ECHO professional learning offerings.
- **Summer Boot Camp.** The P-3 team will offer specialized in-person coaching through summer camp style hands-on teaching opportunities. Using a curated set of assessment, curriculum, and intervention tools, educators in practice will gain mentored practice identifying areas of decoding and language instructional needs, developing a targeted intervention plan, and delivering it. This activity will support educators in practice to deliver explicit, systematic, and cumulative instruction for decoding and language comprehension while also providing direct tutoring services to children. Locations can include at JGCP, or other community locations such as elementary schools, early education program sites, libraries, community colleges, etc. **This activity may also involve first generation college students or youth from local communities as tutors. *This activity may be combined with Summer Literacy Institutes.*

4-12 Supports (C4)

The KUCRL is home to the **Strategic Instruction Model (SIM)**, an evidence-based collection of literacy strategies for students, teaching routines for content area classrooms, and explicit instruction programs. These instructional resources and interventions address

language and reading comprehension strategies, writing skills, and higher-order reasoning skills for content literacy, which is particularly important for upper elementary and secondary grades. LBK will offer the following to educators working with adolescents and school teams serving students with varied literacy needs.

- **SIM Learning Strategies.** To address the key components of skilled reading acquisition (Hoover & Gough, 1990; Scarborough, 2001), SIM has eight reading-focused Learning Strategies educators can use to address word recognition or comprehension skills. SIM writing strategies help students write sentences, paragraphs, essays, and edit and revise their writing.
- **SIM Content Enhancement.** To develop content literacy, SIM Content Enhancement Routines (CERs) are instructional tools that use teaching devices and procedures to plan for and teach critical content in an understandable and easy-to-learn manner. Educators engage students collaboratively in explicit instruction to develop understanding in ways that maintain the integrity of the content while meeting both group and individual needs.
- **Strategic Tutoring.** Through LBK, schools will be able to work with literacy experts to design a strategic literacy tutoring program with tools from SIM for any tutor to use. With Strategic Tutoring, a tutor not only helps a student complete and understand an immediate assignment, but also teaches the student strategies required to complete similar tasks independently in the future. The primary focus of this type of tutoring is on teaching skills and strategies that support learner independence.
- **Adolescent Reading Programs.** KUCRL has developed reading programs that promote adolescent literacy, student motivation to read, and student engagement in learning. Each reading program was developed with federal funding, and both programs were designed for adolescents with limited reading proficiency using science-based reading research and theories (Hoover & Gough, 1990; Kintsch, 1996; LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). Both programs are comprehensive, intensive, and use explicit instruction methods. These evidence-based adolescent reading programs, Fusion Reading and Xtreme Reading, help students acquire the reading and thinking skills necessary for success in challenging core classes and in postsecondary settings. Both programs include instruction in phonics and word knowledge, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In short, the overarching goal of these programs is to ensure that all students have the literacy skills to be successful in school and life.

[P-12 Simulations \(C5, C6\)](#)

LBK Simulation Lab experiences, including simulation videos and extended reality simulation applications, will be available to educators in practice in addition to educators in preparation. Additionally, the LBK website with simulation videos related to literacy teaching and assessments, materials, and instructional resources will be freely available to all educators in practice wishing to use them for their own or others' professional learning purposes. Simulations can be scheduled for individual, small group, or special event (e.g., conference) use and will be available for a variety of devices virtual reality headsets.

[School Leader Supports](#)

As a key partner, Dr. Bart Swartz of CEEL will assist with connecting leaders in practice to the supports available to them through LBK. Likewise, the CRE team will assist leaders in rethinking operations and structures that may limit literacy learning opportunities for students or reduce professional learning opportunities for educators. Three types of

leader supports are planned, but others may be developed based on the needs assessment in the start-up phase.

- **Leader Coaching.** Coaching to support leaders as they design, implement, and support schools' and districts' literacy programs will be available to schools through LBK. CEEL and CRE will tailor literacy leadership coaching to suit leaders' needs.
- **Summer Literacy Institute.** Each summer annually, LBK will host a 3-day institute for diverse educators, including general and special education teachers, school and district leaders, family educators and advocates, speech language pathologists, reading specialists, literacy coaches, and others affiliated with LBK services. These events will be an opportunity for participants to engage in in-depth learning experiences about instructional tools, materials, and interventions to support literacy growth and development. Day 1 will include a keynote address, a general session, and networking opportunities focused on the SOR. On days 2 and 3, educators will select a specific strand that fits their instructional context. For example, as part of the leadership strand for administrators, principals would receive guidance in selecting a reading intervention program. We will encourage educators to attend in school teams so that strategic planning can occur during the conference. We anticipate 300 attendees annually for this event. Follow-up professional learning will be provided using our 3-tiered model.
- **Literacy Plan Development (C2).** An important component of the Summer Literacy Institute will be to assist districts and schools to develop literacy plans. The LBK team will also assist them by reviewing resources and materials intended to address the needs described in their comprehensive literacy plans. Our P-3 and 4-12 teams and Dr. Bart Swartz has experience supporting literacy plan development, as well as helping educators with resource and material review processes. We have tools for evaluating literacy plans that we can use to help with this process.

STUDENTS & FAMILIES

OUTREACH (PARTNERSHIPS)

Existing Partnerships

KU has existing partnerships with schools and districts through its Professional Development School (PDS) program and other districts in its catchment area that frequently partner with the School of Education and Human Sciences to place educators in preparation in practicum and student teaching sites, and other coursework experiences requiring work with students. The Unified Early Childhood and Elementary Education Literacy block require a practicum experience and schools in the catchment area partner with KU to provide rich literacy experiences for educators in preparation such as one-on-one and small group literacy assessment and instruction opportunities. KU also has critical existing partnerships with community organizations in the catchment area that support for families and students, such as Project Eagle and the Family Conservancy Kansas City, KS.



Future Partnerships (C3)

Community Organizations – Our team has worked to **build bridges** with those in our catchment area and across the state who share our vision for improving literacy outcomes for students. We have reached out and will continue to engage organizations with literacy as a primary component of their work. We have secured letters of support from The Reading League KS, Kansas MTSS, The Kansas City Korean Language Institute, and El Centro in KC. A number of other community organizations have committed support to the LBK team as they work to build new partnerships and understand unmet literacy needs in our catchment area.

Regent University Center Director Collaboration – The Regent institutions and Washburn University will develop a Council of Directors of the Centers of Excellence in Literacy. Center directors will meet regularly to share knowledge, identify areas of strength, analyze needs and strategize ways to share, collaborate, and partner with each other. LBK's particular expertise in special education, evaluation, its existing validated materials and resources for P-12 students, and its expertise in VCOPs and virtual coaching may be beneficial to those in other catchment areas. Additionally, the Council of Directors will meet with the Regent and Washburn College/School of Education deans their vision is achieved.

Advisory Board – LBK will establish an advisory board to provide critical feedback and guidance to the LBK team, as well as to identify areas of need in literacy for students, families, and educators. The advisory board will be comprised of catchment area school leaders, families, students, a state representative, and leaders from partner organizations.

P-12 Systems – LBK has obtained an **agreement to partner from school superintendents** across the catchment area. Names of districts are included in the Supporting Documents section of the application. The LBK leadership team will work with system leaders to ensure all students and families their districts serve have access to LBK resources and services. Some of those services, such as literacy tutoring, may be provided at school sites, and LBK leaders will work with district leaders to ensure appropriate space is available to provide those supports for students.

Independent Colleges and Community Colleges – KU LBK leaders have secured **commitments to partner from leaders of Independent Colleges and Community Colleges** in Catchment Area 6. These partners include independent institutions Baker University, Haskell University, University of Saint Mary, Mid-America Nazarene University, Ottawa University, and Johnson County Community College. These partners are critical for ensuring not only student and family access to services, but also because KU and these partners will work together to identify and provide supports to teachers in training at these institutions. These services may include but not be limited to LBK Simulation Lab experiences and training in strategic tutoring to provide direct services to students. These partners will each appoint a representative from their institution with knowledge of their literacy program(s) to serve on the LBK advisory board.

CURRENT SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS & FAMILIES

School Psychology Services

The **Outcomes Assessment, Services, and Intervention Supports (OASIS)** at KU trains graduate students in school psychology. School psychologists in training engage in a variety of practicum and field-based experiences involving P-12 students. Each trainee typically conducts two comprehensive psychological evaluations per year while in the program. P-12 students come from across the state for assessments related to dyslexia,

dysgraphia, autism spectrum disorders, and attention-deficit hyperactivity-disorder. Doctoral students enroll in an Advanced Clinic experiences where they hold an assessment caseload of community clients. OASIS trainees conduct feedback sessions with all clients, involving an explanation of the results of the comprehensive assessment, the interpretation of the results, and recommendations for school, home, and other settings. Recently, OASIS offered a week-long intensive reading intervention camp for children aged 7-11. Using clinical assessments and, in collaboration with special education faculty, phonics screeners and SOR-aligned curriculum based measures, campers are pre-tested before camp begins, so that one-on-one intervention can be tailored to their unique needs. Students attended camp for one business week, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. They engaged in at least one hour of direct individualized intervention, one hour of group reading intervention, and one applied reading activity per day. Post-test data were also collected at the end of the week to document growth related to the intensive reading activities.

Speech-Language Pathology Services

The Schiefelbusch **Speech-Language-Hearing (SLH) Clinic** at KU offers comprehensive services to address communication disorders. Audiology services include hearing assessments, hearing aids, and balance evaluations, while speech-language therapy spans evaluation and treatment for speech, language, and voice issues for all ages. For those with severe communication needs, the clinic provides augmentative and alternative communication support. Additionally, early childhood programs focus on speech and language through structured play, and specialized social communication and literacy camps build social and reading skills in group settings. The clinic is also a site for training speech-language pathologists (SLPs) in training. Graduate students engage in field experiences in multiple clinic programs, gaining valuable assessment and intervention skills. While providing direct services to students and families, SLPs in training are given rich opportunities to practice language and literacy assessments and interventions.

ENHANCEMENTS TO SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS & FAMILIES

P-12 Student & Family Supports

As part of LBK, we will be able to build up the services offered through the OASIS and SLH clinics with a focus on literacy. Drawing from previous successes, LBK will expand the summer literacy camp options and develop after school assessment and intervention services to take place in a variety of KU and community locations such as OASIS and SLH clinics on KU campus, JGCP, El Centro, community colleges, hospitals, and libraries. We plan to continue the tradition of engaging educators in preparation (e.g., school psychologists and SLPs) in the delivery of assessment and intervention services so that they become literacy experts who practice in Kansas schools. It is critical for specialist trainees to learn to engage in **interprofessional collaborative practice** with professionals from other disciplines. School psychologists are critical members of a special education team and necessary to diagnose reading disorders. As language is half of the skill set needed for reading comprehension, and because SLPs are experts in the phonological aspects of language, they must also be trained in the identification and treatment of reading disorders.

Based on the needs assessment in the start-up phase, we will **design additional services and delivery models to match the unmet needs** of our catchment area. We anticipate a significant need for bilingual literacy screening, evaluation, and intervention services, and have started to conceptualize how such services would be implemented. Dr.

Raul Rojas is a Latino professor in KU's department of Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences and will play a critical role in LBK. He will serve on the leadership team to infuse cultural and linguistic considerations in our discussions and plans. It is our hope that we can build out quality bilingual services and engage current and future bilingual professionals in LBK's activities and vision. We will also explore the extent to which we can involve educators in practice, first generation college students, and youth from specific communities (e.g., inner city, Spanish-speaking) to help deliver interventions to younger students from those communities. We hope to develop **Literacy Internships** that would allow current and future KU students to complete semester-long experience at one of the service sites (e.g., community colleges and community locations). This will not only help expand our services across the catchment area but also serve to encourage more people join our plight to teach all Kansas children to read well.

Planning for Synergism

We highlight convergences between our enhancements for educators in preparation, educators in practice, and students & families. Whenever possible, we will capitalize on opportunities to meet the needs of students and families while also providing additional training and/or experience for educators. For example, strategic tutoring programs can be built by providing training for educators, who then provide strategic tutoring at schools and other locations convenient for families. This allows educators to receive additional training and opportunities to practice, benefit from feedback on their implementation from an LBK team member and deliver quality literacy services to students. We anticipate that as we listen to our Advisory Board partners, we will gain additional insights about what kinds of convergences we can explore to meet the needs of multiple groups at once.

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

The **Quality Assurance and Program Effectiveness** activities of LBK will follow the guidelines outlined in the Kansas Blueprint for Literacy and be led by Dr. Christopher Niileksela, a faculty member in the Department of Educational Psychology with experience in program evaluation and in the assessment and identification of learning disabilities. The evaluation will begin with the construction of a logic model that defines inputs (e.g., resources and personnel), activities (e.g., steps to implement), outputs (e.g., numbers of people involved), short-term outcomes (e.g., changes in teacher training and student reading that can be measured in the short-term), and long-term outcomes (e.g., overall impact of the program, goal attainment, and reading performance of students served).

The evaluation of the LBK will focus on both *process* and *outcome* evaluation. The process evaluation will focus on the development and implementation of the LBK activities, including monitoring the steps completed to establish the center, developing enhanced programs for educators in preparation (e.g., simulation labs), and establishing supports for families (screening/evaluation for reading disabilities, collaboration with schools). The outcome evaluation will focus on key outcomes relevant to the program, including monitoring the successful completion of training for educators in preparation and in practice, examination of scores on relevant assessments for monitoring reading of students (e.g., state and district assessments of literacy skills). The KU SOEHS currently collects data on educators in preparation (e.g., PRAXIS scores, courses taken) and will continue to collect and review these data annually. KU has multiple systems that allow for the collection

of data (e.g., Qualtrics for survey administration), tracking of data over time (e.g., access to database software), and sharing the data through the development of reports.

Data will be shared through periodic formative reports for specific activities (e.g., brief reports summarizing the evaluation of professional development) and annual reports summarizing the activities and data collected for the year. Annual reports will include the required data as outlined in the Blueprint for Literacy. When appropriate, reports will report longitudinal data and trends will be examined closely (e.g., reading gains over time).

Satisfaction surveys for professional learning and simulation lab activities will be collected from educators in practice, and that feedback will be used to adjust activities to ensure they are meeting the needs of all educators. Additionally, reach data will be examined by county to ensure that all counties and school districts in the catchment area are accessing LBK services (e.g., are all school districts increasing in their percentage of educators trained in structured literacy). When disparities appear, LBK will take steps to understand barriers and create solutions to increase accessibility or quality of supports.

LBK activities will have multiple positive impacts on educators and students. For educators in preparation, the focus on courses on the science of reading and inclusion of simulation labs as part of the program will provide all future educators completing their undergraduate degree through KU with the knowledge and skills needed to implement these tools in the classroom. For educators in practice, LBK activities will provide a necessary structure for them to gain the knowledge and skills in the science of reading through professional development and coaching opportunities (e.g., simulation labs), with the goal of ensuring all educators have training in the science of reading.

For students, the impacts will be specifically seen in attainment of reading skills because their teachers have been provided with adequate training and supports. We expect to see a higher percentage of students who attain scores that are at least at a level 2 on the state assessment and hope to see more students also attain scores in levels 3 and 4. Generally, we would expect more students to graduate from high school and join the workforce, attend a vocational school, or attend college. We expect SOR assessment and tutoring services will result in improved state assessment scores and graduation rates.

For families, LBK will provide free supports and services their children need. By providing free screening/evaluation and tutoring services with SOR resources, LBK will ease the minds of parents and guardians worried about their children's literacy development, provide them with ways to help their children develop stronger literacy skills at home, and relieve them from the stress of paying for expensive literacy services.

We will employ two measures that are in addition to those required by the Blueprint for Literacy. First, surveys will be used to evaluate the satisfaction with different LBK initiatives, including the simulation lab experiences, professional learning, and the assessment and tutoring services (to be completed by students and parents/guardians who access these services). These satisfaction surveys will focus on the quality of the services provided and ask for recommendations for further improvement and development.

Second, partner districts will share P-3 reading scores and percentage of students in those grades who are reading at an appropriate level based on those assessments. Because P-2 students do not take the state assessment, and early reading assessments measure many aspects of reading that may not be captured on the state assessment (e.g., phonological awareness, decoding skills), these data will reveal how the broad implementation of SOR impacts reading skills in earlier grades.